

Remarks

In the Office action mailed February 23, 2005, claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 12, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,661,886 ("Nelson") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,742,169 ("Akram et al."). See Office action, p. 2. Claims 3, 4, and 9-11 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form with the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. See id. at 5. Claims 13-17 were allowed. See id. The claims which were rejected and objected to are discussed below.

Claim 1

Claim 1 has been amended to state that the combined test ring holder and mechanical support base thickness does not exceed about 1270 microns. With regard to claim 4, a dependent claim of independent claim 1, the Office action stated:

Since one of the important aspects of the present invention is the reduction in the total height of the carrier, and since the prior art generally does not teach configurations in which a carrier having a magnetically bound lid can approach such small profiles, it is the Examiner's opinion that the claimed dimensions are critical and unobvious to a person skilled in the art. Id., pp. 5-6.

Since amended claim 1 teaches a carrier with a magnetically-bound lid where the combined thickness of the test ring holder and mechanical support base does not exceed 1270 microns, amended claim 1 is, in the Examiner's opinion, unobvious to a person skilled in the art. Therefore, claim 1 is allowable.

Claims 2, 3, and 5-7

Claims 2, 3, and 5-7 are dependent claims of independent claim 1, which Applicants have shown to be allowable. Therefore, the dependent claims of claim 1 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Claim 8

Claim 8 has been amended to state that at least one of the test ring cover or the test ring holder is formed from a permanently magnetic material. With regard to claims 9-11, dependent claims of claim 8, the Office actions stated:

. . . [A]lthough the prior art teaches that permanently magnetic materials can be used to form relatively small magnets bound to the carrier and the lid, the prior art further suggests that even these magnets generate magnetic fields that detrimentally affect the chip (see Fukaya, column 4, lines 12-20, for example). Hence the prior art teaches away from forming the test ring cover or the test ring holder from permanent magnet material. Id., p. 6

Since the prior art teaches away from the feature of the claim where at least one of the test ring cover or the test ring holder is made from a permanently magnetic material, amended claim 8 is not obvious and is therefore allowable.

Claim 12

Claim 12 is a dependent claim of independent claim 8. Applicants have shown claim 8 is not obvious and therefore allowable. Dependent claim 12 is also not obvious and allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 8.

Claim 18

Applicants' claim 18 has been amended to state that at least one of the holding means or the covering means is made from a permanent magnetic material. Applicants contend

that this amended claim is allowable for at least the same reasons as Applicants' amended claim 8, i.e., the prior art teaches away from a holding means or a covering means formed from a permanently magnetic material. Therefore, Applicants request that this claim be allowed.

Conclusion

Claims 1, 8, and 18 have been amended. Claims 4 and 9-11 have been cancelled. Applicants have shown claims 1-3, 5-12, and 18 are allowable. Since claims 13-17 have already been found to be allowable in the Office action, Applicants request a Notice of Allowance for the remaining claims.

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this paper (along with any paper referred to as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited with the United States Postal Service on the date shown below with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

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Respectfully submitted,



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